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CHURCH AND RELIGION IN GERMANY

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STUTTGART

THE editors of the Harvard Theological Review have asked me for an article on "the state of religion in Germany as affected by the war, and its outlook in the period of reconstruction upon which — we may hope — the world is now entering." With some hesitation I comply with their request; but I must beg my readers to allow me first a word of very frank introduction.

Americans can have little idea of the terrible sufferings of my country, or of the hopelessness of the future which the peace of Versailles has set before us; nor can they easily imagine the mood of a nation which, after gigantic achievements and the most heroic endurance, has at last been broken in body and spirit by the force of hunger that its enemies saw fit to employ

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His studies and experience have thus peculiarly fitted him to deal with the subject which, at the request of the editors of the Review, he had undertaken in the present article.

as an instrument of war. If, after the slaughter of the innocents, the representatives of Herod had inquired of the good people of Bethlehem concerning the outlook for religion in the period of reconstruction then beginning, they would hardly have elicited a dispassionate reply. And we, who have witnessed the starvation, not of a hundred, but of hundreds of thousands of our children, are naturally in no very scientific frame of mind. Irrespective of the source of the inquiry, we are not just now in a mood for the calm investigation and exposition of our domestic situation. He that is sick almost unto death may indeed seek help and healing, but he is in no condition to compose a treatise on the nature of his malady and the outlook for his recovery. Since, however, I am personally acquainted with the editors of the Review and am convinced that their request originated in the sincerest sympathy, I have decided to attempt the task. Possibly I may be contributing to a genuine understanding of our internal situation; and mutual understanding is, after all, the indispensable prerequisite of any reconstruction.

The reader may recall my article on "Present Religious Conditions in Germany," published in this Review in January 1910. The questions there raised were: Could the German church, which down to the eighteenth century had been the chief promoter and embodiment of culture, endure, in the face of a culture which had become independent of it; or was that independent culture destined to destroy it; and in the latter event, what would be the fate of religion in Germany? The article consisted of two parts, the first giving an account of the actual condition of the German churches; the second discussing the two principal groups whose attitude toward the churches was either indifferent or actually hostile, wage-earners and people of education, or socialism on the one hand, and culture on the other. The present article likewise will be divided into two parts. The first will describe the state of the churches and institutional religion in Germany as the result of war and revolution. The second will concern itself with the temper of those who stand aloof, and their relation to religion and the churches.

I

For the German churches the revolution of November 11, 1918, was of profound significance, for one of the immediate consequences of that revolution was the separation of church and state. Up to that time the German churches were established national churches. This was true of all but the small free churches, the so-called "sects," which had come over from England and America, and constituted only one third of one per cent of the population of Germany. In principle every German was by birth a member of either the Protestant or the Catholic established church of his state, although he had the right to withdraw from such membership if he chose. Each of the twenty-six German states had a Protestant and a Catholic established church. In Prussia, the provinces annexed in 1866 retained their own independent establishments. The states paid a large part of the expenses of the churches, protected their cults, and saw to it that all school-children between six and eighteen years of age were taught the Protestant or Catholic religion. In some states the elementary schools were under the immediate supervision of the pastors and the churches controlled all elementary instruction. In the case of the Protestant churches the connection with the states was especially intimate, since they were governed by consistories appointed by the state, Luther having transferred the office of the bishop to the sovereign. The sovereigns appointed many of the pastors, as well as all professors in the theological faculties. The states, not the churches, controlled the education of the ministry. In time of war the government supplied both Protestant and Catholic chaplains to all divisions. Just as it cared for the soldier's health by means of hospitals and surgeons, and for his bodily needs by means of the commissariat, so it furnished chaplains for his spiritual welfare.

All this was entirely in accord with the character of the German state as it had been developed through the centuries: the state not merely the guardian of law and order and of the free development of the individual, but the promoter of all culture — education, health, science, art, industry, banking, etc. Nor

did it seem proper that the state should leave to individual enterprise the nation's most important interest. On the contrary, many, at least among the Protestants, still clung to the idea of Hegel and his theological disciple Richard Rothe (died 1867) that religious institutions should gradually be absorbed in the state as the representative of all culture, the promoter of the spiritual as well as physical welfare of its citizens.

To the church this intimate connection of church and state was acceptable so long as the rulers of the several states were professing Christians. The Hohenzollerns in particular were devoted to the church, but the other rulers also governed the church with no less solicitude and diligence than they did the state. Many Protestants, moreover, were of the opinion that the separation of church and state would be followed by a breach between conservatives and liberals, with the eventual weakening of the whole church. And they recognized that as a consequence of its relation to the state, the church reached not only those who were Christians at heart, but also, through the religious instruction in the schools and the nominal church-membership of the entire population, the irreligious as well. The missionary task of the church was rendered very much easier.

When the revolution broke out, it was manifest that the age-long connection between church and state was at an end. The chief objection to this connection had always come from the great mass of socialist wage-earners, who denounced the state as the patron of capital and militarism, and extended their antagonism to the state-supported churches. The church was in their eyes merely a means by which the state kept the masses in ignorance and contentment. The socialists, therefore, had always emphatically demanded the separation of church and state. In the Socialist Programme of Erfurt, 1891, they declared their principle: "Religion is a private affair." And when, by the revolution, these same masses took the government into their hands, the separation became inevitable. Now, however, the socialists were no longer alone in their attitude; those who formerly opposed the separation joined them in welcoming it. For the revolutionary states had

ceased to be governed by Christian rulers. They had, in fact, ceased to represent the idealistic Christian German culture of the past. In these states parliamentary majorities were the only sovereigns. And since in Germany friends and enemies of the church are about equally divided, it might come to pass that the majority in parliament, and hence the government for the time being, would be unfriendly to the church, and thus the close connection of church and state prove an actual source of danger to the cause of religion. Of the new states, therefore, no one asked or expected coöperation with the churches, but only strict neutrality towards every religion and every school of thought.

In the first period after the revolution, at any rate, the friends of the church were glad to secure strict neutrality. For it looked as if the new states would not be content merely to withdraw their patronage from the church, but would proceed, as in France, to antagonize it and do their utmost to destroy its influence. In all German states, the ministry of public worship and education, which before the revolution had charge of the churches, now came into the hands of men who belonged to no church; in many states, into the hands of pronounced enemies of the church, especially of radically-minded teachers. In the most important state, Prussia, the "Kultusminister" was the well-known Adolf Hoffmann, a Berlin bookseller who for years had opposed both religion and the churches with malice and contempt, and had directed the movement for popular secession *en masse*. He began by prohibiting prayer in the Prussian schools and proclaiming the abolition of all religious instruction. In other states attempts were made to abolish religious instruction without special legislation; so in Saxony, Gotha, Brunswick, and Hamburg. The union of German teachers made similar demands. Yet most of these people were by no means willing to give up altogether the principle of a positive moral education in the public schools — as in the United States; and it was to be feared that, whereas the old states had consciously cultivated Christian character through their schools and their coöperation with the churches, the new states, by introducing the study of morality and similar sub-

jects into the schools, would foster a positively irreligious training, partly upon an idealistic, but to a great extent also upon a materialistic basis.

In this situation, many people in Germany were surprised to see the energy and strength exhibited by the churches. That the Catholic church would enter the contest and prevent any injustice through the instrumentality of its powerful organization, the Centre party, was apparent to every judicious person. The radical politicians, with all their theoretical utopias, showed themselves lamentably ignorant of history when they failed to foresee that outcome. The Catholics west of the Rhine, in territory under the occupation of the Entente, actually threatened to secede from the Prussian Republic if the irreligious radicals continued to dominate its government. The Protestant churches likewise, though suddenly bereft of their princely leaders, disproved in the most striking manner the old assertion of the radicals, that without the protection of the states and their rulers the churches would forthwith perish. Hundreds of thousands rose and protested against violence being done to the churches. In northern Germany alone seven million Protestants signed a protest against the abolition of religious instruction in the schools. Free Protestant organizations were speedily formed throughout the country — not without immense difficulty, since the oppressive conditions of the armistice had crippled all railway traffic and even the postal service. The various political parties were interrogated as to their attitude on the subject of the church and religious instruction. In the elections of January, 1919, the radical parties lost many votes, especially among women voters, because they were suspected of designs unfriendly to the church. In the empire as a whole, as well as in Prussia and most of the other individual states, the first parliaments elected to frame a constitution had no socialistic majority. The national as well as the state governments were forced to admit men of the democratic and of the clerical (Centre) party as secretaries of state; and a legal separation of church and state distinctly hostile to the church, as in France, was effectually prevented.

The American system of separation, which makes the churches mere private associations, and which the Moderate Socialists desired to bring into effect, in accordance with their principle, "Religion is a private affair," was rejected by Catholics as well as Protestants, and therefore by the non-socialist parties. Few supporters of the church could bring themselves to accept a system which would have put the churches on a level with the sects. Rather it was universally demanded that the church, although now independent of the state, remain "Volkskirche," a national church which in principle includes all the people, although withdrawal from it should continue optional with the individual; that the churches should not become private associations, but should be public corporations¹ independent of the state; that the Protestant and Catholic religions be taught in the public schools by ministers and teachers; and that the churches should meet their financial requirements by levying income-taxes. It was agreed that direct financial support by the states be discontinued; but, since the states had in former times confiscated lands and funds belonging to the churches, in most of the states a fixed annuity was agreed upon as compensation for such property, or else an equitable adjustment, impossible at the moment on account of the fluctuating value of money, was promised. As in the past, so in the future, the individual states will eventually regulate their own relations to the churches; but the National Constitution, in Articles 135-150, laid down the general principles which are to govern such regulations. The following are the most important provisions:

ART. 136. Civil and political rights and duties shall be in no way affected by the exercise of the privilege of religious freedom.

No person shall be required to disclose his religious opinions.

ART. 137. There shall be no state church.

Freedom of association in religious societies shall be maintained. Confederation of religious societies within the Empire shall not be subject to limitation.

Within the bounds of the common law, every religious society shall regulate and administer its own affairs as it may see fit. It shall appoint its own officials, without the participation of the state or the municipality.

¹ "Körperschaften des öffentlichen Rechts."

Religious societies may acquire legal status by complying with the general provisions of the civil law.

Those religious societies which have heretofore been recognized by law as public corporations, shall continue to enjoy that privilege. Other religious societies shall, on their application, be granted the same rights, provided their organization and membership give assurance of their permanence.

Religious societies which are recognized as public corporations shall have power to levy taxes, on the basis of the civil tax-lists, in such amounts as the state law may determine.

ART. 138. The state legislatures shall provide for the commutation of all existing state support of religious societies, whether it be based on statute, contract, or other legal title. The principles governing such commutation shall be determined by the national government.

ART. 144. All schools shall be subject to the supervision of the state.

ART. 146. Admission to any public school shall be determined by the child's ability and aptitude, not by the economic and social position or the religious affiliation of its parents.

Nevertheless, upon the application of parents or guardians, elementary schools of a particular faith or way of thinking may be established in individual communities, provided such establishment be not prejudicial to the well-ordered conduct of the schools, and with due regard also to the provisions of the first section of this article. The utmost possible consideration shall be given to the wishes of parents or guardians.

ART. 147. Private elementary schools shall be permitted only in case a minority of parents or guardians, whose wishes must be considered (in accordance with Art. 146, sect. 2), have not been provided by the community with a public elementary school of their own faith or way of thinking.

ART. 149. Religious instruction shall be part of the regular course in all schools except such as are professedly non-religious or secular. Such instruction, while subject to the supervision of the state, shall be in conformity with the essential tenets of the religious society concerned.

The offering of religious instruction and the conduct of religious exercises shall be optional with the individual teacher. Attendance on such instruction shall be at the option of the person controlling the child's religious education.

The theological faculties of the universities shall be maintained.

Every one will recognize the inherent difficulties in the above provisions, especially those relating to the schools, which were necessarily the result of compromise between the totally opposed ideas of socialists and clericals. Religious instruction a "regular" branch — but "optional" for both teacher and pupil. "According to the tenets of the religious societies" — but "under the supervision of the state." Schools not separated according to creed — but, on the motion of a certain number of parents, Protestant or Catholic schools must be established.

In view of the fatal cleavage in German culture² there was but one logical alternative: either to make the schools mere organs of instruction, rather than of an education influencing both mind and character; or else, since that policy is generally rejected by German teachers, to give up the idea of a uniform system of public education, and supply separate schools for Protestants, Catholics, and unbelievers. Naturally the teachers are far from satisfied with this result of a revolution which many of them greeted as the opening of an era of great paedagogical reforms. But they themselves are partly to blame for the disappointing outcome, since, by agitating at first for schools without religious instruction, and then for religious instruction independent of the churches, they caused religious people to distrust the spirit of the new state and the training to be furnished by its schools.

On the whole the churches may be well satisfied with the constitution. In some states, to be sure, where the radical parties are in the majority, the constitution will be interpreted in a manner as unfriendly to the churches as possible. But if the general condition of the country remains at all orderly, and Bolshevism does not get the upper hand, all the German governments will proceed very cautiously with the separation of church and state, and will avoid every appearance of injustice to the churches. In the past two years they have learned that nothing serves to strengthen counter-revolution so much as injustice of that sort. Moreover, the elections of the summer of 1920 have returned a majority friendly to the church in the national as well as in many state parliaments. In view, however, of the fluctuating value of money, the immense debt of the nation — the whole desperate situation, in which there seems no prospect of escape from starvation and economic ruin — the definite solution of these problems, especially those relating to financial support and school reform, will probably be delayed for a considerable time.

Americans may think it strange that, since the German nation undertakes the separation of church and state at all, it should content itself with half-way measures. Yet there can

² See my former article, page 104.

be no question that that is in fact what German conditions demand. Here, where we have, not many denominations, but only two great churches, which have been connected with the several states for centuries, and have rendered them immeasurable moral and spiritual service; where the government has always promoted and regulated all the agencies of culture; where private initiative is less developed than is reliance on the government — here complete separation of church and state, with the churches transformed into mere private associations, would be a revolutionary step, equally detrimental to church and state. I may add, in this connection, that if our enemies should adopt a more reasonable attitude, and moderate their oppressive terms so that we may live, the churches in their new relation to the states may still be of invaluable service to the nation; whereas, if the present unreasonable attitude persists, chaos will certainly result, in which, as in Russia, the churches also will be engulfed. In that event, the moral as well as the material ruin of Germany will be sealed.

As the German churches proved stronger externally than either enemies or friends had believed, so also internally. During the war the churches had exposed themselves to much criticism and condemnation. Many who were tired of war and the suffering it entailed blamed the churches for encouraging the people to persevere to the point of victory. Only a few of the clergy sided with the pacifists. Most of them, taking into account the state of mind of our enemies, saw no chance of arriving at a mutual understanding. But many people were finally convinced of the soundness of that judgment only by the terms of the armistice and the peace of Versailles. The result was great dissatisfaction with the churches, which, instead of promoting peace, fanned the flames of war and blessed its weapons. On the other hand, to thousands the church became their truest friend and comforter in the great distress. At the outbreak of the war, the masses flocked to the churches as never before. It is true that the great hopes which were entertained of a revival of religion because of the war quickly vanished; the longer the war lasted, the more the life of the church tended to return to normal. Indeed, war showed its

usual effects in the impairment of morality and good custom. Nevertheless, the church reared itself a monument in thousands of hearts by its great work of help and comfort for the wounded, by its material and spiritual assistance of the lonely and the suffering, by its letters, bibles, and religious tracts sent to soldiers and prisoners of war. And when the sad end of the war was followed by the revolution, those who saw in it, not the dawn of a new time, but the ruin of all they had cherished, turned again to the churches in great numbers, the middle-classes in particular, who had always been very friendly. Spiritually, then, as well as externally, the churches remain a living power. Only the peasants, formerly their most loyal adherents, have in part become disaffected. For them the war involved a great spiritual crisis. On the one hand, they have become rich as never before, and mammonism has, in the case of some, destroyed their interest in spiritual things; on the other, in the great changes wrought by the war, many good old customs have been abandoned, and the mingling of peasant soldiers with men of other vocations has had unfortunate results. Then too, the state regulation of business has embittered the peasants and set them against all agencies of public order. Hence in many localities, and especially among those who took part in the war, the church and religion have suffered serious losses. But in general the peasants have remained loyal to the churches.

One element in the situation is especially gratifying. Most people were of the opinion that a split between conservatives and liberals within the Protestant church was inevitable when once the state ceased to hold them together. This opinion has proved mistaken. To be sure, some of the conservatives, when the new church was being organized, did insist that a rigid creed was the most important requisite; that the state and the consistories appointed by it had wrongfully tolerated "unbelievers" (i.e. adherents of modern theology) as ministers; and that the situation must be cleared. That view, however, was opposed not only by the liberals, but also by many conservatives, as well as some pietists. Professors Schmitz and Heim at Münster, and another leader of the pietists, Michaelis, main-

tained that so long as the orthodox were allowed freedom to work, they ought not to leave or divide the church, which as a united "Volkskirche" offers unrivalled opportunities for spreading the gospel among the masses. Up to the present, therefore, the unity of the old church has been preserved in all the states, and the great evil which most people apprehended in the event of the separation of church and state has been avoided. Special credit is due the liberals, who, in this time of distress as already during the war, refrained from every form of propaganda in behalf of their own views, worked solely for the "Volkskirche," and occupied the front rank in the fight against irreligion and the enemies of Christianity.

A very difficult task was the adoption of new constitutions for the churches. By the abdication of the sovereigns, the state churches had at one stroke been deprived of their heads, and the church authorities (consistories) were without legal standing. Nor did the general synods, which supplemented the consistories in the work of church-government, seem sufficiently representative of the membership of the church, since they had not been elected directly by the members, but the district synods had sent delegates to the provincial synods, and these in turn had sent their delegates to the general synods. Now that the state gave a vote to every man and woman of twenty, and sovereign national assemblies were engaged in drafting state constitutions on the basis of such universal suffrage, the existing synods seemed hardly qualified to determine the new constitution of the churches. In southern Germany, in Württemberg and Baden, the church authorities quickly hit upon the proper course. The existing synods ordered elections for constituent synods on the basis of universal direct suffrage; and those constituent synods in turn framed the constitutions of the churches. By these the entire legislative power was left in the hands of the newly-elected synods, while the administrative power was intrusted to church-presidents chosen by the synods and consistories nominated by the church-presidents. In Prussia, however, serious difficulties arose. The old general synod flatly refused to summon a constituent synod to be elected by universal suffrage. It cannot be denied that in a

"Volkskirche," of which even the enemies of religion are nominal members, universal suffrage is of doubtful value; if the socialist masses exercised their right to vote, the church in some states might come entirely into their hands, that is, into the hands of materialists and unbelievers. But while for this reason the synods of the northern states, notably that of Prussia, refused to yield to the democratic tendencies of the time, the new Prussian government, which, so long as the separation was not consummated, continued to hold supreme power in the church, insisted that the general synod grant universal suffrage for the election of a constituent synod. This conflict, which created much excitement in Prussia, has thus far prevented the assembling of a constituent synod in the leading German state, although the government and the synod have recently agreed upon a compromise.

On the whole, in Prussia as in the other states, the constitution of the church will hereafter be much more democratic. In all the states, the supreme power will be lodged in synods, which in most of the states (presumably in Prussia also) will consist of one-third ministers and two-thirds laymen. Women will have the vote in all Protestant churches. The influence of the individual parish in the appointment of its minister will be much increased. Indeed, if a minority of the members of a parish are dissatisfied with the minister's theology, they will under certain conditions be permitted to hold services of their own within the parish. But on the whole, the congregational element in German churches will be small even in the future; the church-presidents, generally elected for life, and the consistories nominated by them, will guard the churches against the vacillations caused by changing majorities.

Just as the individual state governments have, as the result of the revolution, lost some of their importance in comparison with the national government, so the prevailing tendency toward centralization has brought about the convocation of the first German "Kirchentag" (Church Congress). In the past, for the conduct of the common affairs of the churches, such as the representation of Protestantism over against Catholicism, the care of Germans abroad, etc., there existed only a

committee composed of delegates from the various consistories. Now, after thorough preparation, a Church Congress representing all German Protestants met for the first time in September 1919 at Dresden. Consistories, synods, theological parties, missionary societies, and Christian associations, sent their delegates. This assembly represented and disclosed great difference of opinion, theological, political, and social. Nevertheless, at a time when the new states and the spirit of the age tended to ignore both church and religion, it furnished a remarkable demonstration of strength and solidarity, and received a good deal of public notice. The "Kirchentag" is to be a regular institution, meeting if possible every year, not with the purpose of creating a "Reichskirche," or uniform national church, but merely to constitute a league of the various Protestant German churches, which for the rest will remain independent of each other, especially in matters of creed and doctrine. The common interests of German Protestantism will be promoted and defended, whether against the state, Catholicism, or unbelievers, through this "Kirchentag." Its first session was closed with the adoption of several very important declarations: an address to the Protestants of Germany regarding the humiliating impeachment of the Emperor and the detention of our prisoners of war; another to the Protestants in the lost provinces of Alsace, Poland, West Prussia, and Danzig; and a statement regarding the German foreign missions, which have been ruthlessly destroyed by our enemies.

How the theological differences will develop no one can foresee. Under the new democratic system, which through its recurring elections exposes theological differences to the discussion of laymen as never before, dissensions will certainly increase. The settlement of such controversies by governmental consistories has ceased. It is not certain that division can be permanently prevented. Possibly the orthodox party will secede in churches where the elections result in favor of the liberals. Thus far the elections have resulted to a surprising extent in favor of the conservatives, many of the liberals and all the socialists having kept away from the polls. Meanwhile, their common enemies, Rome, unbelief, and immorality,

strengthened by war and revolution, will continue to present great common tasks and impel the various parties to keep together. The provision of special services for the benefit of a dissenting minority within the parish is an attempt to satisfy scruples of conscience and thus prevent secession.

Like all other sciences in Germany, theology faces hard times. Our impoverished country cannot afford the ordinary instruments of science. Already the printing of scientific books and papers has become well-nigh impossible, and so has the purchase of scientific books by students and ministers. Assuredly not Germany only, but the rest of the world as well, will be seriously injured by this starving of German scholarship.

A strange element in the new relation of church and state is the fact that the theological faculties remain institutions of the state, the states, not the churches, appointing their professors. But this should not be matter of regret; the selection of the ablest scholars and the objectivity of scientific research is better guaranteed by the state than by the majorities of synods. On the other hand, the churches will be able to supplement the education furnished at the universities by maintaining, as some of them have in the past, seminaries of their own, to which candidates for the ministry may repair for training in practical work after leaving the university.

More lamentable even than the state of theology is that of the benevolent Christian organizations, particularly the numerous "innere Mission" societies, which are devoted to the care of the sick and the infirm, work among prisoners and outcasts, the fight against alcoholism and immorality, and to evangelical missions. All these organizations are now confronted with such great deficits that their maintenance is extremely problematical. One of the saddest effects of our defeat is the ruin of our works of charity.

Internally, the character of the German churches seems about to change in one respect, as a necessary consequence of the separation of church and state. In the article of 1910 I pointed out that the German churches, though differing from each other in many points, are all of a decidedly Lutheran type, in the sense that they emphasize the piety of the heart which is gen-

erated by the "Word," and give less attention to institutional religion or the element of religious fellowship. I said then that this was well enough so long as state, education, and public opinion in Germany were essentially Christian, but that the growing neglect of the institutional church was endangering the cause of religion. Now that the state and public opinion have adopted a distinctly neutral attitude towards religion, the judgment I expressed seems truer than ever, and indeed its truth is generally recognized. "The church of the past was a church of sacrament, the church of the present is a church of the word, *the church of the future must be a church of fellowship*," said a prominent minister at the evangelical "Gemeindetag" at Leipzig in May 1920. The movement for building up a well-organized, rich, and vigorous parish life, with greater activity on the part of the laity, has been quickened. New organizations have come into being, such as the "Volkskirchenbünde" and "volkskirchliche Laienbünde." These associations were first called into existence by the situation in which the churches found themselves after the revolution, and the urgent need of demonstrations backed by numerous signatures; but they soon became centres of parish work and lay activity. The future of the Protestant church in Germany will depend very largely upon its success in putting an end to the inveterate passivity of the laity, and to the neglect of religious institutions as nurseries of Christian fellowship; and in uniting the real Christians within the great "Volkskirche" into small but active circles, which shall maintain a healthy parish life and effectively champion the cause of the churches before the general public.

In concluding this chapter on the position of the churches in Germany after the war, we may point out that, contrary to the expectation of the utopians who brought about the revolution, the Catholic church has been very greatly strengthened. By the separation of church and state, that church lost nothing but supervision and restrictions, while retaining its leaders. On the other hand, it gained unlimited freedom for monasteries, religious orders, and theological seminaries, the election of bishops, and a papal nuncio at Berlin. In the national, as well

as in many state governments, the Catholic (Centre) party is of decisive importance. The Imperial chancellor, Fehrenbach, belongs to that party. For the present, by reason of the prevailing distress and their common struggle against the atheistic policy of the revolutionists, peace between Protestants and Catholics has been fairly well preserved; but in the future, the increased power of Rome in Germany will provoke serious contests between the two bodies; and it is to be feared that, although in the majority, the disunited Protestants will prove the weaker party.

II

We have found the state of the church after the war, though by no means free from danger, yet not entirely unsatisfactory. The church has proved far too strong to be swept away by the forces of culture, in spite of the fact that the latter have come to be practically independent. The outlook becomes more serious when we turn to the second part of our survey: the temper of the outsiders and their relation to religion and the churches. This subject must be considered under two aspects: *First*, the relations of the Protestant church and the German working class, and *Second*, the relations of the Protestant church and German culture. Both these problems, it will be recalled, proved complicated in our article of 1910. The first appeared quite insoluble for the immediate future; the second seemed less difficult, since German culture, at least theoretically, was beginning to turn from naturalism to idealism, and hence was adopting a more sympathetic attitude, not indeed to the church, but at least to religion. In both respects the situation since the war and the revolution has not materially changed, although both questions have grown more acute for both sides — the working class and the educated class on the one side, and the church on the other.

We may begin with the working class, the vast majority of whom are organized into socialist parties. As a result of the war and the revolution, our prediction of 1910 has been fulfilled: the moderate and radical socialists have separated. The Moderate Socialists have been in control of the govern-

ment of Germany for the past eighteen months, and have therefore been compelled to do a certain amount of constructive work. In the course of their endeavours, the best of them have come to recognize that socialism made a serious mistake in teaching the masses to antagonize all existing institutions, and to base their hope of future welfare upon economic revolution alone, to the neglect of moral agencies. Some of their leaders have confessed as much. Others, like the Prussian Kultusminister, Haenisch, have explicitly acknowledged the moral achievements of the church, especially in the education of the masses. Still others, such as Schulz, Meerfeld. and Keil, have gone so far as to urge socialists who have not left the church to take an active part in its affairs, now that it is no longer in the service of a capitalistic and militaristic state.

Nevertheless, it can scarcely be affirmed, even of the moderate socialists, that they have actually drawn nearer to the church. It is true that, being compelled to do constructive work instead of contenting themselves with mere opposition, the moderate socialists have begun to adopt a more objective attitude also towards the church. Their press is beginning to show some regard for their own doctrine that religion is a private affair, and to refrain from deliberate attacks on religion and the churches. But as yet there is nothing like a positive inclination of moderate socialists toward the church or even toward religion. For one thing, the antipacifist position of the churches during the war had the effect of increasing the antagonism of many of them; while the problem of divine government in connection with the war furnished too tempting material for their scoffing. Moreover, since the revolution, workingmen are so taken up with urgent economic, trade-unionist, and political questions, that few of them have time or interest for religious subjects and the revision of their ideas concerning the church. Even the fact that some ministers have gone over to the socialist party has failed to bring more than a very few socialist workmen into touch with the life and work of the church.

More sinister is the attitude of the Independent Socialists ("Unabhängige Sozialisten," "Kommunisten"). In ever increasing numbers the majority of wage-earners not only re-

fused to follow their leaders into constructive work, but, persisting in the old attitude of hatred and opposition, abandoned the socialist party and went over to the Bolsheviks, in wrath and disappointment at the failure of the revolution to bring about the promised paradise. Among such the animosity toward the churches, now independent of the state, has remained as strong as that formerly directed against the established churches. The press of these radical socialists preaches Marxian materialism, according to which all churches are merely a means to stultify the masses and support capitalism. The surprising energy exhibited by the churches in the crisis led to a new movement to bring about secession from the church *en masse*. But in spite of this animosity, thus far only a small fraction of the workmen have left the church, about one half of one per cent of the population. Most wage-earners paid no church taxes anyhow; and their religious habits, together with the influence of their wives and children, have kept them from withdrawing.

Between 1912 and 1914, when for the first time such a movement for a general secession from the church was started by radical socialists like Hoffmann and Liebknecht, about 100,000 working-men left the churches. This movement subsided, however, when the war broke out. But after the great disappointments of 1918, when even the revolution failed to break the influence of the church, and the radical attitude of the revolutionists toward the churches actually turned many, especially women, into anti-revolutionists, the agitation for secession was resumed. Organizations such as the "Freethinkers," the "Central Union of Proletarian Freethinkers," the "Committee of the Unbelievers" are eagerly at work at the present time. And more favorable to their cause than all their agitation is the fact that many wage-earners, on account of their increased wages, must now pay church taxes. Consequently, since the close of the war another 100,000 (including women and children) have left the churches. When one considers, however, that at the last election there were twelve million socialist votes, those numbers are seen to be quite insignificant. Moreover, the withdrawal of children from the religious instruction

furnished in the public schools, and still more the establishment of non-religious schools (in accordance with articles 146 and 149 of the national constitution) proceed with surprising slowness, in spite of the continued agitation, especially on the part of socialist teachers. By far the greater number of children, even in the predominantly proletarian schools of the large cities, still attend the classes in religion. Nevertheless, the movement for secession from the church seems bound to increase. From the point of view of religion, it may not be wholly undesirable that people who reject religion in fact should not continue to profess it in name. But the realization of the ideal of a "Volkskirche" is seriously endangered by that movement.

More serious than the defections from the church is the fact that the majority of workingmen, even after the disappointments of the revolution, still fail to perceive that mere economic changes, without the birth of a new spirit, cannot create a paradise. The war, in Germany as in other countries, has thrown the moral standards of many into confusion; and the revolution has still further undermined respect for authority and made men critical of inherited institutions. To be sure, many radical leaders recognize that we need a new spirit if we are to emerge from our misery into better things. There are many to whom their Bolshevism is itself a new religion for which they would gladly give their lives, and who struggle with pure idealism for the anticipated salvation of the future. We must admit, also, that the churches, whose adherents belong mostly to the conservative political parties from which working men keep aloof, often cling too closely to the conservative side of political and economic questions, and show too little appreciation of the material and moral condition of the working class. But even where clergymen have turned to the radical parties — and some have gone very far, witness the so called "religiös-social" movement, with its organ, "Das neue Werk," which has adopted the radical socialism and pacifism of Swiss theologians³ — the effect in winning socialists for church and

³ One of them, Dr. Hartmann of Solingen, openly addressed an ultimatum to the church, threatening to lead a secession *en masse* himself if it did not reform in the direction of democratic socialism and radical pacifism.

religion has been negligible. Long-continued socialist agitation has rendered the heart of the working class utterly irresponsive to the influence of the church and the Christian religion. The situation is very serious — no small part of the seriousness of Germany's future. Either we shall overcome the fanatical mutual distrust of the classes in Germany, and in particular free the working class from its materialistic delusion and hostility to religion, which, I am convinced, is possible only through an awakening of the spirit of the love of Jesus in both upper and lower classes; or else Germany, like Russia, will perish together with its churches and its working class. Whether the "Volkskirche" in its traditional form will ever be able to win back the workingmen in Germany must be regarded as doubtful. Rather we may hope that in the distress which all of us, and not least our working-men, are now facing, a prophet may rise from the working class itself, to preach the gospel of Christ in a new tongue and devise new forms of fellowship for a re-awakened Christian faith.

The outlook is less discouraging, as was pointed out ten years ago, when we come to the second question, the relations of the church and culture, or the church and the educated classes. German culture, we saw, was already turning from the realistic-naturalistic thought of the second half of the nineteenth century to a new idealism. Certainly, the movement in that direction has made progress during the past ten years. The war and the revolution have contributed to the same result. Many are ready to admit that the old realistic culture went bankrupt in the war; that the much esteemed technical sciences celebrated their greatest triumph in the invention of the most terrible instruments of slaughter; that imperialistic politics led the nation to disaster; and that our splendid economic development proved one of the main causes of the war. The idea that only a new spirit of devotion, sacrifice, and sincerity can save us from the Russian chaos, that our external culture must give way to a new inwardness, is widely prevalent among educated men and women. Moreover, the dread of Bolshevism has caused many to look to the church as the defender of order and authority. The shallow mockery of

all religion and contempt of the church, which for a long time were common among the educated classes, have to a great extent disappeared. In the distress wrought by the war, and in the anxiety of the revolution, many educated people have found their way back to the churches. The movement for secession, inaugurated by professors of natural science like Hackel and Ostwald, makes very little progress among the educated. Its adherents are mainly teachers, among whom the old naturalistic radicalism, with its accompanying hostility to the church, continues to flourish. Not only the conservatives, but the liberal and democratic parties as well, proved friendly to the church on the issue of its separation from the state, and labored together for the maintenance of religious instruction in the schools.

But over against these gratifying facts we must set others not so encouraging. Simultaneously with the growth of theoretical idealism, the war, the universal distress, and state regulation of business, have resulted in a considerable degree of practical materialism, sensuality, and covetousness even among the educated. The struggle for existence, political and economic, has in many cases submerged the higher interests. And where this has not happened, and where educated people, especially among the young, are looking for a new idealism, they are for the most part still very far from the religion of the Christian church. Some, unmindful of history, turn to individualistic mysticism. Others are enticed by Christian Science and similar movements. In particular, the "spiritual science" (*Geisteswissenschaft*), or theosophy, of Dr. Rudolf Steiner has made considerable headway among the educated. Precisely this shows the remarkable change which has come about within the last twenty years. The same educated men who then held up natural science as the final solution of the riddles of the universe, now ally themselves with the mystical community of Rudolf Steiner, believe in a universe full of ghosts and angels, study their own "etherial body" and "astral body," and speculate on the question who they were in a former stage of existence. Even some Protestant theologians have been won over to these beliefs. Steiner himself insists that his

aim is not to combat, but to deepen and intensify Christian faith; that he is engaged in a common struggle with the churches against the great enemy of all genuine civilization, materialism. As an ally in this struggle, the church may perhaps welcome him; but it is to be feared that, with the inevitable disappointments of this "spiritual science," people will be drawn away from genuine religion and landed in abstruse and empty speculation.

So the problem of the "Protestant Church and German Culture," is no nearer solution today than it was ten years ago. In spite of the fact that the last few years have seemed to force them together, they still remain apart. No doubt the church has not been without fault. It has often been too inflexible, too rigid, too little mindful of the realities, too much engrossed with the poor in spirit. On the other hand, not a few people of education eagerly await the rise of some new prophet, some creative genius, who, amid the present confusion of thought and the crumbling of foundations, shall point a new way and proclaim the old gospel in new language. May the bitter and fearful period which by the will of God we face, and which threatens to surpass in incalculable misery all that has been experienced in the past, raise up for us such a man! Assuredly he would prove a blessing, not only to Germany, but likewise to the other nations, which are beset with the same confusion and cherish the same longing for new ideas and a new spiritual leader.